Mr. Frank Mankiewicz
National Public Radio
2025 M Street NW
Washington, D.C.

1/18/79

Dear Mr. Mankiewicz,

While I did not expect a response to my letter of a month ago relating to the amateurishness of the so-called reporting of the House assassins committee I confess that I had hoped you, as lawyer and journalist, would teach your reporters a little about norms of the craft and about evidence and partisanship. Perhaps you'd prefer something less suggestive of payback, like impartiality or reporters making full and proper use of their critical faculties and not editorializing.

If in somewhat reduced magnitude the same offenses against traditional standards, fairness and I suggest offenses against the mind are repeated in tonight's exclusive leak, which I just happened to catch.

The evidence which I have had occasion to examine and found to be totally valueless and as equally without credibility, the so-called Rays as bank-robbers evidence, was described by NPR as, if I recall the precise word, "powerful."

I have no personal interest in writing you, none in asking for time to respond and none in what NPR reports so uncritically about these Keystone Kops.

I do have an interest in the integrity of the press and in the people receiving honest, accurate and unbiased representations of what is news. Where the news deals with significant events, and I regard a political assassination as deeply subversive and of great significance, reporters and editors who care about more than justifying their or their editors' pasts or about currying future leaks should seek to apply and to live and work by what I believe are the fine standards of traditional American reporting.

Having more than one source is a respected practise. Consulting informed sources is another. Your tonight's reporting was limited to the committee's version and to an editorialized version of what a professional felon alleged, without even saying he had purposes in making the allegation. (I have taken the time and trouble to check what his former lawyer, now judge, testified to. It stacks.) Although at best all this is is a selfserving claim, NPR repeated it as factual.

You reported that the committee uses none of its executive sessions transcripts in its report, or at least does not disclose them. The reason is obvious as it is a reason a diligent reporter would have sought to learn why all the so-called evidence was adduced in total secrecy. From the work I've done with the slight samples I obtained the committee knows it is fraudulent and having nothing else, misrepresents even that. If the committee does not break its word, an event I would not expect to interest NPR, then it will print my analysis of its alleged evidence of John Ray as a bank robber. There was no reflection of it in the content you reported. Naturally.

I write you in the expectation of nothing and under adverse circumstances, which leads me to ask you to excuse my worse than usual typing. I was putting on new and tight venous supports when I decided to listen to NPR for the time this required. Initially they restrict circulation and I can't wear them very long.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg